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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

II. CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

K. Lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment

1. In the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1/ the theme of environment is dealt with in a specific chapter under the objective "Development". Attention was focused on natural and man-made disasters and the environmental degradation that results. There was concern that such degradation deprived a growing number of poor women, in rural and urban areas, of their traditional means of livelihood and pushed them into marginal environments, leaving them in critical circumstances.

2. The theme of environment was also implicitly touched upon under the objectives "Equality" and "Peace". Women were recognized as intermediaries between the natural environment and society in areas such as agro-systems, the

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* E/CN.6/1995/1.

provision of water, energy and sanitation, and in relation to demographic pressure. However, the lack of statistics specific to the environment and disaggregated by sex was considered an obstacle to the assessment of women's contribution and needs, as reflected by the example of the Green Revolution and many agrarian reforms which failed to understand the environmental impact and the key role played by women producers.

3. In order to reduce the negative impact of environmental degradation on women and, at the same time, increase and improve women's real and potential impact on the environment, actions were suggested for the creation of alternative means of livelihood for affected women and the inclusion of women as beneficiaries in and contributors to all programmes and projects dealing with environmental degradation and ecosystem management. The main actions were related to the promotion of women's control of resources such as land, capital and technology, the control of the product of their labour and the rights to benefits from agricultural research, training and credit.

4. Governments were also requested to include women at all levels of decision-making in the planning and implementation process. Sanitary conditions needed to be improved, including drinking water supplies. The environmental impact of policies, programmes and projects on women's health and activities should be assessed and any mismanagement corrected, if negative effects are detected.

5. In the first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, it was noticed that the theme of the environment was one of those least often referred to in the answers from Governments. However, related areas such as agriculture, rural development, water and energy supply received considerable coverage. In this case, many developing countries saw a direct link between macro models of development and environmental degradation, with its detrimental effects on women's lives. In this context, deforestation was mostly associated with large-scale lumbering, agricultural expansion and over-use of existing agricultural land than with micro survival practices.

6. Adding to the intermediary role between the natural environment and society suggested by the Forward-looking Strategies, most countries recognized that women are active, key actors in conservation and the safeguarding of natural resources, acting as managers, producers and users. Many countries expressed the view that traditions, inheritance laws and practices and lack of funding for women's programmes resulted in a lack of resources for women, jeopardizing the possibilities and opportunities of increasing and strengthening women's impact on the environment.

7. Another suggested factor was that the majority of programmes were still oriented towards developing small-scale and non-sustainable projects, often separated from main development projects and, moreover, in answer to the need for alternative but also sustained means of livelihood.

8. On the other hand, in 1990, there was concern about the lack of national machinery to deal specifically with environmental issues and with special concerns to women's involvement as planners, contributors and decision makers in the field of environment.

9. In some developing countries, in order to increase the supply of energy for rural and poor households, education on energy conservation and alternative sources of energy has been made available to women at demonstration centres.

1. General considerations

10. The environment is referred in many reports presented for the 1994 review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women as an important new area of concern, recognizing the role of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in such awareness. Many national reports from all regions reported specifically on this issue, while other reports made reference to it. This reflects the growth of the awareness about the importance of women in environmental considerations.

11. Some countries noted that they have specific national machinery on the environment, usually inaugurated in the past five years, in preparation for and fulfilment of Agenda 21, 2/ while others mentioned their concern with this international document.

12. A common statement is the recognition that women are affected in specific ways by environmental degradation and that, on the other hand, women's practice and knowledge in dealing with environmental issues should be better assessed.

13. Some countries declared that the women's movement has had a great impact on discussions about sustainable development, before and after UNCED, and that thanks to women's associations and non-governmental organizations, the environment is gaining higher priority on society's agenda. Emphasis is also given to the role of women's associations and women non-governmental organizations, but more as pressure groups than partners in the national machinery.

14. The association between the social roles of women and men and the environment is considered complex by the majority of countries that dealt with the subject and generally was approached without support of desegregated data by sex, making it difficult to monitor achievements in women's conditions of life and status in relation to men.

15. Very little information is provided in relation to global programmes and mechanisms established since the Rio Conference and their impact on women on the linkages between environmental degradation, women's quality of life and, for example, big business practices. National reports presented a broad list of issues when considering environment as a specific field of action. However, in addition to women's roles in areas such as water and energy and the effects on women's health, for example, not all the countries follow the same guide, indicating a flexibility of interpretation of what is an environmental theme. These variations also suggest the need for more systematic international efforts from the United Nations system to introduce and diffuse a set of standards, areas of concern, perspectives, and suggestions for indicators.

16. Despite recognition of the growth, visibility and importance of women's non-governmental organizations and women's associations to run and monitor

environmental programmes, in general there is an institutional weakness between women's organizations and the governmental environmental machinery.

17. The importance of women's practices in health care, farming systems, crop production, food processing, the use of forest resources and energy, water and sanitation supplies is increasingly being recognized world wide. Nevertheless, few efforts have been made to reverse women's underrepresentation in formal governmental institutions that deal with those issues. Women's presence in the national machinery that deals directly with environmental issues is said to be growing in some countries. However, women are far less well represented at the top managerial levels of departments and ministries in fields such as environment, ecology, fishery, forestry, rural development, agriculture, water, energy, sanitation and habitat. The slight progress made in some countries and areas is considered insufficient for facing the long-term inequalities in the sharing of power and decision-making between women and men. Some Governments mentioned that women's domestic burden and traditional values that support the male status jeopardized women's real power-sharing.

18. Women's health and the environment were addressed, highlighting damage caused by chemicals and pollution to the reproductive systems of women and by radioactive elements to mothers' milk. Epidemiologic studies indicate a possible link between breast cancer and organocholorine pesticides such as DDT. Exposure to toxic substances such as pesticides, lead, and radiation are also thought to cause male infertility and female sterility.

2. Regional trends

(a) Developing countries

19. Most developing countries expressed their concern with the environment, indicating that awareness of its importance and the centrality of women's roles is a recent but growing trend which has been stimulated by the active involvement of women's associations, non-governmental organizations, international agencies and the Agenda 21 process.

20. Most national reports gave a clear indication of the gravity of the environmental situation and its impact on women. For example, testimonies on how African women are more affected than men by the precarious balance between fragile natural resources and population density were common.

21. In developing countries, where natural resources are central and in the absence of alternative means of livelihood and services, some countries suggested that poverty is strongly linked to the mismanagement of natural resources, resulting in environmental degradation. For women, environmental degradation means an increase in their workload of domestic chores and other reproductive activities. In these countries, adult women and girls are more likely to be charged to get water for the family's needs, walking about 30 km daily in some rural areas, as stated by a government report from a Sahelian country. Water and wood-gathering are also tasks commonly performed by adult women and girls. The quality of the environment - of its soil, water and energy

sources - affects women's daily routines. Time and energy are spent every day trekking back and forth to the river or other water source.

22. According to other national reports, the elimination of traditional means of livelihood, such as wood collection, is not so acutely related to the survival strategies of the poor. Rather, environmental degradation is exacerbated through the use of unfriendly technology and fertilizers by business corporations and rural-based industries. Water contamination, desertification and deforestation, caused by the type of land use and land control of large private corporations, are affecting the quality of life of rural families, compelling rural to urban migration in different areas. It is recognized that laws and regulations to control such practices by Governments are needed. In Asia, many national reports stressed that, due to loss of croplands, erosion, land conversion, deforestation and other natural and man-made environmental calamities, millions of families suffer, and women, in particular, pay the social cost of displacement and increasing out-migration. They also expressed the need for laws dealing with environmental protection, training about environmental protection; bio-gas and solar energy; campaigns for planting trees, grass and flowers; investments on energy conservation and environmentally friendly technology; and programmes to deal with population pressure on the land. Poverty and consumerism are extreme processes highlighted as basic causes of environmental degradation. Some Governments also stressed the need for a new paradigm of development.

23. Women as conservers of the natural environment, especially indigenous women in the Latin American and Caribbean region, are praised for their environmentally sound technical knowledge. The need to stimulate and use such knowledge by formal researchers is recognized.

24. In many African countries, where more than 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas, the rural population is characterized by a high level of male absenteeism which leads to increased women's responsibilities for livestock and crop cultivation, including the work traditionally done by women as mothers, food providers, home makers, traders, health-care givers and water and fuel suppliers.

25. In urban areas, the major specific environmental problem referred in many national reports is linked to poor or non-existent sanitation systems. These services, to the extent that they exist, are actually provided by women, supplying water and fuel.

26. Despite women's active role in the management and creation of the urban and rural environment, women do not have the authority to decide on land use in order to create alternative means of livelihood and contribute to environmental development. They are still discriminated against with respect to their access to and control over land and property in general, despite fundamental changes in the law. In many countries, land is not accessible to female heads of household or to single women. In some countries land is routinely allocated to the male of the household. In some African countries, in the case of a female head of household, the closest senior male relative is requested to make the application on behalf, not of the woman, but of the male heir.

27. In some reports, food security is also a basic part of the debate on the environment. Women are recognized to be the basic producers of food for local consumption, but they haven't the power to decide on the use of the land or the means to improve its productivity. The majority of Governments recognized that, in addition to de jure restrictions in land ownership by women, de facto obstacles existed and poverty associated with legal illiteracy on rights and traditional values were mentioned as two such obstacles. One country mentioned that just 15 per cent of rural women owned the land they worked. Studies presented in several national reports found that the agrarian reforms adopted by some countries did not benefit women, since special national machinery and instruments to deal with inequalities were not adopted. In one developing country women had an opportunity to gain access to and ownership of land through agrarian reform programmes, but, 90.2 per cent of the land was still controlled by men.

28. Along with the lack of access to property, the lack of access to credit is considered one of the basic obstacles to the economic advancement of women in rural areas in most developing countries. The reasons suggested were the absence of financial institutions in rural areas, lack of collateral, lack of information about credit sources and cultural inhibition and prejudice. It is estimated by one African country that rural women represented no more than 10 per cent of all borrowers. Even in the case of special programmes to provide credit to women, the number of women producers with access to credit is very small in the rural areas. Many developing countries commented that local village usurers have been the main leading source for people in dire need of money. Women and men who have to use such credit sources are facing the burden of high interest rates.

29. It is observed that a sexual division in relation to natural resources is the norm, and that women are more likely to be relegated to less productive areas, more hurt by environmental hardship. The division of power between men and women is reflected in the unequal distribution of land. Women tend to work the most endangered and unproductive land. According to one national report, when an agrarian reform was introduced at the end of the 1980s, men obtained 73 per cent of the dry land and 83 per cent of the irrigated land.

30. According to several Governments, environmentally sound technical knowledge depended on credit facilities not at the disposal of rural women. One Government from the Latin American and Caribbean region mentioned, in regard to this obstacle, its efforts to design credit programmes related to technology for women. The results were said to be poor, and less than 15 per cent of women benefited from the programme.

31. In Asia, developmental strategies for agricultural improvement are slowly beginning to have some effect on the traditional divisions of gender roles in rural areas. Farm manure, which was traditionally carried by women or transported by ponies, is now beginning to be delivered by machine power. Weeding tools have greatly reduced the drudgery of weeding in water-logged paddies, which is mostly a woman's task. For some countries modernization has tended to reduce women's paid employment in rural areas while increasing their unpaid labour on family farms. For example, one Government wrote that current

agricultural practices, especially the increasing use of herbicides, are displacing large numbers of women and reducing labour per hectare.

32. Women's participation in agricultural activities still lacks visibility in official statistics. Several Governments, while recognizing the important role of women in rural areas for family survival, did not recognize their economic contribution to the national economy. This was attributed to the lack of gender sensitivity in formal economic indicators.

33. Agricultural extension services usually target men who are in cash-crop production. In many countries few women obtain access to extension services, even though they grow much of the food consumed in the household. In some countries extension education is oriented to home economics tasks, with no emphasis to production or trade skills. Programmes seem to assume that women are not involved in agricultural production and do not require technical information. The majority of extension workers are men. Cultural constraints limit the extent to which extension agents can work with women farmers. Literacy training for women has concentrated on issues such as home economics, nutrition, and food-preparation. In rural extension work, a common assumption is that women are primarily housemakers who do not need training and information about agricultural work. Training institutes related to agricultural activities have a very limited number of women agents trained in agricultural subjects.

34. Many reports noted that at the beginning of the 1990s more women were found in decision-making positions in departments related to the environment and/or agriculture or in ministries of community development or agriculture. Nevertheless, in many countries ministries such as those responsible for sanitation, water and energy do not have a mechanism for specifically addressing women's roles in those areas. Similarly the housing ministry in several countries cannot easily address the shelter needs of female-headed households, given women's legal disadvantages in land ownership and their limited incomes. Most Governments recognized that, despite the traditional responsibilities shouldered by women in rural and urban poor areas and their knowledge of environmental issues, women lack representation in decision-making positions in the national machinery. They also recognized the low awareness of the role women play in caring for the habitat in urban and rural settlements. The importance of women's knowledge of food security is not yet integrated into development planning or project implementation.

35. The existence of a women's office in the Ministry of Agriculture is not uncommon. In Africa, in countries where women's organizations are strong at the national level, the national machinery on women included a focal point in the Ministry of Agriculture.

36. A large gap between women and men in the choice of careers has also been noted. A relatively low proportion of college students enrolled in agriculture were women. However, one African Government reported that at the university level, in medicine and food sciences, women's enrolment had grown from 20 per cent and 13 per cent in 1988 to 28 per cent and 40 per cent in 1991, respectively. In most developing countries women's educational levels have improved over the decade. Still, women are underrepresented in the sciences

related to the environment, such as agronomy, veterinary medicine, biology, ecology and health.

37. Many international and national non-governmental organizations and women's associations direct their efforts towards environmental issues. In many countries they cooperate directly with the Government. Non-governmental organizations are engaged in environmental protection, raising awareness of the environment, and developing and informing the public on energy-saving devices, water and sanitation systems and tree-planting. One obstacle to the effectiveness of non-governmental organization work in Africa is that the organizations can offer services only so long as they have resources.

38. Forests are basic survival resources for many women in developing countries. Although women obtain food, fruits and leaves from forests for consumption and commercialization, they are usually underrepresented in projects of forestry conservation. An increasing awareness of women's role in soil forestry management and alternative energy is remarked upon by some Governments. Women's roles in the management of forestry resources, especially in dealing with edible and medicinal herbs, is emphasized by some Governments, and traditional women's knowledge in this field, especially that of indigenous people, is considered an area that deserves more attention in national development programmes.

(b) Developed countries

39. Few developed countries reported on the issue of the environment per se. However, some related areas were mentioned under other concerns, and the majority of the reports mentioned some degree of concern on the issue of sustainable development.

40. In the developed countries of Europe and North America, an increase in the educational level of women is highlighted as an improvement of the past decade. However, educational involvement in some areas that are strategic to the environment, such as technology and the sciences, is still commonly lower among women than men. A strategy to encourage greater participation of girls and women in mathematics, the sciences and technology is cited as a positive action just beginning to be taken by Governments.

41. Unequal power relations are found when governmental departments related to the environment are studied, although important steps towards women's representation at decision-making levels have been taken recently. A few countries said that women were found in strategic environmental decision-making positions, such as in the ministry of agriculture and fisheries, and positive results from these appointments were mentioned. Illustrative is the example of a country that appointed a woman to a high position in a related ministry related to the environment. It subsequently launched campaigns, projects and financial support schemes, such as grants for establishing new agricultural enterprises and training programmes, which have proved very effective in recruiting young women to the agricultural sector. However, a disappointing picture still prevails regarding the access of women to top decision-making in the field of the environment.

42. In the economies in transition, the same concern is expressed - i.e., that women are not fairly participating in the new decision-making processes. In some countries, in areas related to agriculture and the environment, high-ranking women can be found. They include a minister of health, a minister of environment and urban planning, and officers in charge of environmental issues and in the ministry of science and technology. Women's factions and women's groups within political parties are mentioned as dealing with environmental issues.

43. Governments of the region recognized the specific problems of rural women and mentioned that they were addressing their concerns. One country indicated that, besides services, such as day care centres and transport, steps were being taken to enable women from rural areas to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the introduction of new technology - for example, in homeworking. Nevertheless, it was recognized, by different countries, that more had to be done to meet women's needs in rural settlements.

44. The food sector plays a significant role in many economies in transition. In one country, about two thirds of workers in the state agricultural sector are women. Some countries indicated that in the 1990s there was a growth of women's emigration from the rural areas, accelerating the ageing of the rural population. It is also stated that women managing farms were in general less educated than men and that older women were more dependent on the rural infrastructure. Moreover, equipment was out of date, and the work was physically difficult. They also noticed that female-headed farms were smaller than those run by men.

45. Inadequately developed rural trade networks, in spite of favourable changes which have taken place since 1989, coupled with inadequate health care, educational and cultural deprivations, and poor public transportation, telephone and energy services are basic reasons for the hardship of rural life cited by women in economies in transition.

46. However, women are said to have equal access to credit in the economies in transition, and in one of them, unmarried mothers are being given credit under favourable conditions. However, despite the fact that there are no legal obstacles to the ownership of land, capital or other means of production by women, it is recognized that the de facto situation may be different. Disaggregated data on the ownership of land, real estate and other means of production are not available.

47. Food production is still a basic source of living for many women in some developed countries; however, as mentioned in the report of one country, the majority of women in the agricultural sector are unpaid family workers.

48. In the developed countries, women and men usually have equal rights to inheritance. However, according to one country report, there is discrimination against women in agricultural enterprises. The agricultural property of the deceased is first allocated to the sons. Although this provision has been included in the law in order to prevent the fragmentation of agricultural land, it contradicts other legal provisions, as was noted by women's groups that participated in the elaboration of the national report of that country. In the

same country it is said that women workers in the agricultural sector have been neglected. The social security law provides a voluntary social security system for independent and self-employed agricultural workers, but it excludes from social security benefits women agricultural workers who are not heads of households and those who usually work as unpaid family labourers.

49. In terms of urbanization and environmental security, services that have an impact on the quality of life in the use of the urban public space, such as those related to air pollution, drinking water, sanitation, transport, crime control, space and public vehicle design, the needs of disabled persons and those with toddlers or infants, and women's safety, health and workloads are addressed in some of the reports from the developed European and North American countries.

50. Some national reports focused on housing conditions. One country reported that single parents had worse housing than the population as a whole and were less likely to own their own dwelling. They often lived in cramped and/or poor houses despite the recognition of improvements in the housing conditions of the population in the decade. It was noted in one report that, in general, governmental housing policies did not treat women and men differently; where women had particular needs, they were taken into account at the national and local levels. Women heads of household were typically better represented in local authorities or housing associations in metropolitan areas.

51. Water quality standards and the need for safe drinking water are commonly referred to in reports that deal with environmental issues. Poor women in both urban areas and rural areas were pointed out as the groups most affected.

52. One coastal European country indicated a concern with the absence of research, institutional measures or programmes for women in the fishery sector.

53. In some countries women's presence in the national machinery dealing directly with environmental issues was said to have increased during the past three years. However, in others, the usual inequality of power existed - i.e., the pyramidal structure, with women underrepresented in the top managerial positions, despite the constant rhetoric praising women as natural conservationists, more connected than men to an ethics of caring for the earth and more affected by unfriendly environmental actions.

3. Actions taken

(a) Developing countries

54. National reports listed a variety of projects that were considered successful in the regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Generally, Governments stated their recognition of the importance of international cooperation and environmentally sound projects for women's advancement.

55. Three types of models have been set up in different countries to deal with women and the environment: integrated programmes and projects, taking into

consideration women and men as beneficiaries; women's components in development programmes and projects; and projects for women only.

56. Some countries mentioned plans on environment and sustainable development with specific reference to women. Commonly, agriculture, water, energy, natural disasters and food security are the basic areas of concern of these plans. More and more projects, especially in relation to food production, fisheries and alternative energy supply, and drinking water facilities, mentioned women as beneficiaries or partners.

57. It is recognized by many African countries that the current institutional involvement of women in water and sanitation services is still low at the community level. In a recently adopted national water policy, one African Government stipulated that all village water committees should be made up of six people, half of whom should be women.

58. Some national reports stated that in the 1980s international cooperation followed a pattern by which women were considered more as the beneficiaries of development than as partners in it. Others reported that in some cases women were considered only in their role as mothers and caretakers. It is observed that in the 1990s a change had been registered in that pattern and that a new perspective was introduced in programmes and projects. Donor agencies were incorporating gender and environmental concerns into project formulation and implementation and were providing technical assistance for the development of gender sensitivity in macroeconomic policies at the national level. But, on the other hand, some reports also stated that a clear definition of what is understood by gender and how gender should be dealt with in development plans, specifically environmental plans, is still missing.

59. In Africa, where the principal source of energy is wood, grass-roots women's associations and non-governmental organizations have been engaged in many initiatives to save wood. The 1991 energy policy of one African country, which counted on the collaboration of women's non-governmental organizations and cooperation from international agencies, put emphasis on the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind energy, biogas and natural gas. However, it had little success.

60. Women's role as environmental managers, through knowledge of appropriate and environmentally sound energy sources, such as in the selection of wood, was seen as basic. One Government is investing in the diffusion of alternative kitchens, reforestry programmes and organic fertilizers in order to introduce alternative styles in the relationship between population and natural resources. Awareness by women of soil forestry management and alternative sources of energy is being promoted by certain African Governments. However, programmes on the environment usually do not mention women in relation to conservation. Programmes for improved kitchens to stem the demand for energy have been initiated in a number of countries, with the participation of women's non-governmental organizations and international agencies. According to one national report, improved kitchens can save up to 50 per cent of the wood consumed. Women participated actively in the planning and implementation of the programme, with the support of a communication project to promote social awareness of women's role in the programme.

61. The Sahel was a target area for action in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The region continued to deserve special attention at the national and international levels.

62. Several African countries mentioned the establishment of rural child-care services, run by women's grass-roots organizations, with the support of the Government and international agencies. They were, however, few in number and in great need of continued support.

63. Several Governments mentioned that, in rural areas, non-governmental organizations ran successful programmes to provide water for productive activities. Others provided easily accessible sources of potable water for rural and urban areas. According to one Government, thanks to its water programme, 45 per cent of the rural population and 75 per cent of the urban population would have benefited by the end of the decade.

64. A self-help programme for home improvement to teach women basic skills, with emphasis on environmental issues, was mentioned as a success story in one national report. The popular programme reached 2,000 women, who then formed groups of their own to sustain their activities, by, for example, establishing community gardens. Household food security programmes, set up with the assistance of an international agency, were mentioned by different African Governments as very beneficial to rural women.

65. Several projects were mentioned in the national reports as important contributions to the advancement of women's status. Many of them are oriented towards the creation of alternative means of livelihood, such as income generation and survival strategies, taking into consideration poverty and the extreme needs of certain groups of women, while others are oriented specifically towards environment conservation. They are complemented by education and training. The majority of the projects counted on international cooperation.

66. In some countries, projects launched at the end of the 1980s included self-sufficient fish-breeding units run by men and women and designed to regenerate hydrographic basins; credit and land legalization with special attention to women in agricultural activities; and skills-training courses on crafts and food preservation.

67. Some Governments are implementing, with international cooperation, national programmes and policies related to sustainable development, with special emphasis on organic agriculture, and community health, with popular participation and a gender perspective. One programme is designed for the integrated development of a mountain region, with special concern for coffee production and the exploitation of forests. It hopes to discourage migration. It is said to have benefited women by providing water services and electricity and access to social services. Another country has a national environmental policy for rural women, and another one mentioned that women are integrated into the national programme for water and sanitation services. Research on environmental issues and on gender in agricultural activities is being conducted by several countries. One country referred to a programme of research on the working and living conditions of women in the flower industry, with special attention to health effects and the problems of indigenous women.

68. Indigenous women's knowledge of herbs, forestry and environment protection is mentioned by some Governments as a traditional source that is coming to be recognized and supported by specific development projects. On the other hand, it is recognized that much is to be done in this field.

69. One African island country mentioned the importance of a fishery production project run by women, with the support of an international agency. An African regional network of women in agriculture, with the support of a European country, has been working on several local projects, such as the construction of collective and individual sanitation services. Forestry programmes, with women tending nurseries and planting trees, have been implemented by many Governments.

70. The importance of international cooperation and environmentally sound projects for advancement of women was highlighted in many national reports. However, caution was expressed that, in the area of environment, most of the donor support to women has been directed to microprojects in the form of supply, training and credit facilities. Some countries mentioned that much of the international support for programmes for the advancement of women came in the form of initial fund, or seed, money. After the money is spent, these programmes have great difficulty surviving or spreading into other areas of the country.

71. Certain African national reports highlighted programmes of development to mitigate the social costs of structural adjustment policies, giving responsibility to the rural population, chiefly women, in the management of natural resources.

72. One African Government stated that, in its development plan, priority is given to educating and demonstrating to farmers how to expand their farm yields and how to construct simple on-farm storage facilities. Specific attention is to be given to women small-holder farmers.

73. Some national reports mentioned the participation of grass-roots groups in projects about forestry, energy, water management, and pollution control in urban areas.

74. One national report mentioned a project on alternative technologies to encourage village women to improve the environmental health in their villages by improving local water and sanitation and making smoke-free fuel-efficient stoves available.

75. Another national report mentioned the organization of a cooperative production system to develop an alternative cultivation process which protects the soil from erosion and nutrient depletion.

76. Another Government mentioned a project that provided assistance to small-holder and marginal farmers to increase their productivity. The project also included an alleviation programme and provided agricultural credit, especially to women.

77. In another country, an environmental impact management agency was created to assist in the formulation of policies on environment pollution control,

implement hazardous waste management, and monitor and control activities that have an important environmental impact.

78. In another, there is an ongoing project oriented towards tree-planting, terracing and the rehabilitation of degradated land. One project, involving women farmers, converted an arid area to available land by processing human waste into fertilizer.

79. Among other development projects to benefit women and the environment in the near future, some Governments mentioned the production and marketing of green charcoal as an alternative source of energy, organic fertilizers, and bio-pesticides; the promotion of recycling; the inclusion of gender-sensitive advocacy on the environment in the curricula at all levels of education; housing for the rural poor, with special emphasis on female heads of households, women in urban areas, and migrant working women; and the construction of adequate shelter, with clean drinking water, meeting the needs for culturally appropriate and practical space for cooking and child care.

80. Some Governments had decided to use a gamut of strategies, including training and gender-sensitization, in formal and informal educational systems, through community groups and non-governmental organizations.

81. Other actions were mentioned, such as the promulgation of a series of laws to promote environmental protection and prevent air pollution. Efforts were being made to train people in colleges and universities about environmental protection; half of the trainees were women. One Government mentioned that it supported different types of research institutes with a full range of subjects on environmental science and technology. Women were mentioned as the natural beneficiaries of the country's environmental protection efforts. In one country, in order to reduce the pollution by toxic gas and cinders resulting from burning coal - so important for household use - women had started to use coal briquettes and new stoves. Biogas and solar energy systems had been used to reduce air pollution and reduce the intensity of women's labour.

(b) Developed countries

82. Regarding housing policies, the national reports from the developed countries mentioned the rule of considering the particular needs of disadvantaged groups of women. In housing legislation, a safety net for pregnant women and families was devised. The institution specifically concerned with women's rights in one national machinery had been demanding that the public and private providers of housing recognize the needs of young women leaving care, low-income women, older women, single parents, ex-service wives and others.

83. In the legal realm, one country referred to a "right to manage", recognizing the strong role of women in tenant management organizations. Air pollution, air quality and clean water are also subject to regulation in developed countries. A national report on the situation of women in a North American country observed that guidelines were recently released to help health agencies develop fish consumption limits, designed specifically to protect women, especially those of child-bearing age, and children against exposure to

chemical contaminants in non-commercial freshwater and estuarine fish and shellfish.

84. Some Governments had incorporated into policies the proposals of women's groups for improving the quality of life, the habitat and the environment in urban settlements. Women's knowledge is mainstreamed into governmental planning in a few cases. One European Government mentioned as a successful experience the adoption of "a women's perspective" in public planning since 1985. Such a perspective aims at providing a basis for decisions concerning the use and protection of resources and seeks the participation of all affected parties. A municipal master plan was developed to go beyond traditional physical and economic planning, to encompass culture, school and the environment, taking into consideration issues that affect women's daily lives. Different types of municipal plans, with similar participatory methodology, were adopted in the fishery and agricultural sectors. According to one report, a shift towards more "feminine" values was achieved: a more caring and integrated approach, with more concern for environmental protection and ecology, and the practicalities of everyday life and diversity of ideas. The women's perspective began to be integrated into new businesses. Despite the recognized success of that type of participatory planning, sensitive to gender and the environment, such experience was limited to specific small municipalities, benefiting a small number of persons.

85. Another country reported on the implementation of a scheme, launched in 1993, which consists of the identification of those products that do the least harm to the environment in order to help women as consumers make informed decisions. The Government is also working with regional electrical companies to produce a voluntary scheme of information on energy efficiency for domestic appliances. Another country mentioned legislation on pesticides and food safety, recognizing that, although federal legislation is not targeted towards women, several rules have a significant impact on women and children, due to persistent sexual divisions of labour and power, with women in charge of food shopping, preparation, and in the rural areas, production too.

86. Only one Government noted that information is made available on the environmental safety aspects of biotechnology and on genetically modified organisms. Besides campaigns, projects and programmes run by women's non-governmental organizations, some Governments reported on the following activities of the women's movement: the organization of a "green" university, research and dissemination of knowledge on the environment, and the organization of a year of the environment in Europe.

87. Women's organizations are thought to have played an active role in a national referendum in which the nuclear option of one country was abolished. The scope of the women's movement against environmental disasters was broadened to protest and prevent such disasters as they relate to economic power: the use by corporations and Governments of toxic chemicals and hazardous waste, for example. One referendum closed down a factory that manufactured pesticides. The success of similar campaigns was listed by a few countries.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I, Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), Vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference.